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National Park Service Offers Grants for Teachers to Incorporate Local Heritage into Curriculum

Education professionals throughout Louisiana will have an opportunity to make local heritage a part of the classroom experience with grants now being offered by the National Park Service Heritage Education—Louisiana program.

This is Heritage Education—Louisiana's fourth annual mini grants awards for teachers with exceptional ideas for incorporating heritage education in their classrooms. Over \$85,000 is available for individual proposals of \$2,500. The deadline for submission is March 16. All K-12 public school teachers are encouraged to apply. For details and a grants submission form, call 318-356-7444 or visit www.heritage-ed.com.

"Our partnerships with Louisiana's teachers have produced more than 150 innovative heritage education lessons in 38 parishes across the state," said Kim Bowen, Heritage Education—Louisiana assistant coordinator. "Each year, our grant submissions are increasingly innovative, so we have high hopes for 2005."

Kathie Istre, a teacher at Dolby Elementary in Calcasieu Parish, used her 2002 grant to create an exhibit of Louisiana historical sites with photos taken by her students. The project not only taught students the basics of digital photography, but to see their culture through a different lens as well.

"At the beginning of this project, I asked my students, 'Can you make a difference? I heard a unanimous no,'" Istre said. "The goal of this project was to big awareness to the community and be a community contributor. Now, they see that anyone no matter the age can make a difference to the community."

Heritage Education – Louisiana was established as part of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training in 2000 to help children develop an appreciation and responsibility for the buildings and landscapes in their locations. The program hosts annual workshops to show teachers statewide how to use local cultural resources in developing lesson plans that incorporate subjects across the curriculum. In addition, the program has awarded more than \$50,000 in mini grants to teachers for the development of innovative heritage education lessons and activities. Heritage Education – Louisiana is located on the campus of Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana.